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ISSTIP JOURNAL

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CONTENTS

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Editorial	2
<i>Marina Petrov-Stoykovich</i>	
Carola Grindea and ISSTIP	4
<i>Nancy Lee Harper</i>	
Singing – A Continuous Muscular Movement	7
<i>Raija Roivainen</i>	
The Shoulder	
A short overview of anatomy and painful conditions	10
<i>Dr Hara Trouli</i>	
Developing The Piano Technique	12
Optimal and rational aspects	
<i>Damjana Zupan</i>	
Potential Physiological Hazards of Violin Playing	16
<i>Emma Peak</i>	
Perfectionism	21
<i>Andy Evans</i>	
Piano Notes	25
<i>Simon Markson</i>	
Reviews	27
<i>Andy Evans</i>	
Reflections	29
9th Sydney International Piano Competition	
of Australia	
<i>By Earl Owen</i>	

Editorial

Dear ISSTIP Members and Friends,

Some of you perhaps already know that ISSTIP is going through many changes and has recently slowed down due to ill health of our Chairman, Carola Grindea. Over many decades, her remarkable work has transformed ISSTIP into a worldwide renowned organisation due to her huge effort working in many different fields. Regrettably, she is no longer capable of working as much. Therefore, our Deputy Chairman, Dr Hara Trouli, other Committee Board Members and myself, with my additional role as Co-Editor of ISSTIP Journal, are trying to keep up with the work and do the best we can to preserve and develop ISSTIP further.

We are making every effort to continue our London seminars with the first one for this academic year to happen on Sunday 7th December with very important talks from health and music professionals. Furthermore and for the last few months, we have tried to organise the development and modernisation of the ISSTIP Web Site as we think it is important for the future of our Trust. Apart from other issues relating to ISSTIP that include renewal of Health & Performing Arts Clinics in 2009, we are planning to initiate an ISSTIP Online Forum that will be free of charge to all members. A download of the ISSTIP Journal would also be free for members. This is all quite exciting and we believe this could be important to you, our loyal existing members, as well as our new members who will wish to join. Our AGM with crucial issues to be discussed and decided will be scheduled for the beginning of the new year.

For the last year, **ISSTIP UK** has not been as active as before due to the previously mentioned circumstances, however it has made some progress. We had several workshops on the Grindea Technique, working closely with Prof. E. Owen and Music Medicine Therapists. At the Kingston Cello Festival at Kingston University in February 2008, Helen Neilson gave a remarkable performance talk relating to her research on body awareness and the role of the central role of the body in music. She has drawn upon ideas from recent cognition and perception studies of music performance and from theories from the world of dance including the work of Mabel Todd and Rudolf Laban, including ideas from Eastern

spirituality including the ancient Japanese practice of "Hara". Also of great importance is the ongoing MA Course on Performance Health at Thames Valley University in London, which is run by Andy Evans, an ISSTIP arts psychologist.

ISSTIP abroad had many activities that included ISSTIP FORUM, as a part of the EPTA International Conference at Novi Sad, Serbia, between the 2nd – 5th November 2007. "Getting Fit for Performing" was the motto of the FORUM which was introduced by Damjana Zupan (ISSTIP Slovenia, moderator), who presented the work of ISSTIP and introduced everyone to the Grindea Technique. This was followed by presentations from around the world including: Megumi Masaki (Canada, Athletic Musician), Alan Fraser (Canada / Serbia, Feldenkrais Method), Anton Voigt (Austria, Movement Techniques), Elin Persson (Norway, Breathing Techniques), Mladen Delin (ISSTIP Slovenia, Creativity) and Marina Horak (ISSTIP Slovenia, Meditation). The Forum proved the importance of such gatherings and the necessity of organizing events with more time devoted to the care of musicians.

ISSTIP Slovenia (EPTA Slovenia – section ISSTIP, coordinator Damjana Zupan), founded in December 2006, had 6 meetings from January until June 2007, with lectures and workshops covering Psychology, Grindea Technique, Creativity on Stage, Meditation, Fitness Training for Musicians, Meditation and Body Awareness Techniques through Dancing. Its work was also presented on Slovenian National Television and introduced at the ISSTIP International Conference on Health and the Performing Arts in London, June 16th 2007 (Damjana Zupan, Marina Horak). In November 2007, at the EPTA Slovenia Piano Days, Damjana Zupan gave a lecture on 'Developing the piano technique'. In the collaboration with the Slovenian National Education Institute, ISSTIP SLOVENIA continued its work in 2008 by organizing two day-long meetings which included lectures and workshops covering psychology (more about confidence and stage fright), dance (dance – therapy or a burden, dancing workshop), yoga for musicians, Grindea Technique, creativity onstage, models of facing the audience and meditation. The media is also very interested in

the ISSTIP SLOVENIA work, as various interviews and articles have been published for magazines and presented in TV programmes.

ISSTIP in Sydney, Australia

The Director, Professor Earl OWEN, A.O., Legion d'Honneur, began the Sydney Musician's Clinic in the late 1970s and it became the Australian home for their ISSTIP since 2004.

In the past year, musicians and other performing artists have continued to come for diagnosis and treatment for a variety of debilitating conditions related to their occupations. Children are being referred now in greater numbers to the Clinic by hosting Master Classes in ordinary schools and Conservatoriums of Music.

In the past year, two artists who ran Master Classes in many Sydney schools with sizeable music departments were Cristina Ortiz (Piano) and Dimetri Ashkenazy (Clarinet). Many performing artists have been treated successfully for over a year for Focal Dystonia as ISSTIP has refined the treatment protocol for this severe and disabling condition, allowing these performers after almost a full year of

treatment to the completely recover. Professor Owen lectured on How to Avoid Musical Mahem in several States, and to several Orchestras, and to the audience and participants at the 2008 Sydney International Piano Competition of Australia, the Annual Piano Teacher's Convention, and the Annual Violinist's Conference as well as several School's Music Departments this year.

ISSTIP Portugal now has two bi-lingual publications of its previous international Music-Medicine Symposia, PerforMED. For more information, please contact Nancy Lee Harper at nancy.leeharper@gmail.com. Future plans include a Wellness Forum during the national conference of EPTA-Portugal in the Spring of 2009 and the formation of a Wellness Clinic.

ISSTIP Secretary & Co-Editor
Marina Petrov-Stoykovich

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CAROLA GRINDEA AND ISSTIP

By Nancy Lee Harper ©2008

Carola Grindea has been described as “the most famous piano teacher in England.”ⁱ Her gifts are known far and wide. Guru, educator, visionary, liberator, musician’s musician, she is affectionately known as “Caro”.

Two World Wars marked important events in Carola’s life. She was born in Romania on 29 January 1914, just a few months before WWI broke out. It was in her native land that the fundamental roots were grown of who she would become. There, she would invent music games with her siblings, instructing them through her perfect pitch and natural instincts on how to make music. She would graduate with a First Prize at the Royal Academy of Music in Bucharest in the class of Prof. Constanza Erbiceanu and meet her future husband, Miron, a literary genius.

In England, at the onset of WWII, the young couple, on holiday in London and forced to stay during perilous circumstances, would choose to remain permanently. On their first whole day in London (3 September 1939), which coincided with Chamberlain’s announcement that war had broken out, they went to visit Myra Hess. They watched the tearful Myra lock her two Steinway pianos. Preparing for the long walk back from North London to West Kensington Settling in London – they were too poor to afford the bus – they begged her to play one piece on the piano to set them on their way. It would be Myra’s interpretation of that Brahms Intermezzo that would sow the seeds for those highly successful National Gallery Wartime concerts. Myra Hess had planned to drive an ambulance, but Carola persuaded her that “anyone can drive an ambulance and her musical talent could be more beneficial in helping the nation during troubled times.”

Settling in London, Carola would cultivate many seeds and later reap the harvest of her bountiful work. Here, Dame Myra Hess would play a pivotal role by assisting Carola in her career, sending her to study with Tobias Matthay (1941-1943). In a reciprocal fashion, Carola’s suggestion that Myra organise the National Gallery concerts during the dreadful bombings gave birth to an act that brought comfort and hope to many people and led to Myra’s

subsequent knighthood. After many years working in the Rumanian section at Bush House, Carola taught Piano at the French Lycée (1950-1967) and Piano Pedagogy at the Guildhall School of Music and Dance (1968-1990). In her adopted country, Carola would come in contact with some of the world’s greatest leaders, thinkers, artists, writers, musicians, doctors, etc. These contacts and her gift for attracting and mixing people of varied backgrounds, plus her remarkable memory, gave birth to many important and historic events, far too numerous to mention here.

At an age when most people are thinking of retiring, Carola founded not one but two international associations. **EPTA (European Piano Teachers Association)** came into being in 1978 and now has as members in 41 countries plus affiliates all over the world. In September 1980, **ISSTIP (International Society for the Study of Tension in Performance)** was conceived and then launched a year later when 73 people attended its first International Conference at The Gipsy Hill Centre of Kingston Polytechnic in Surrey, in September 1981. According to Carola, “This event was not without its critics, but subsequently, there were many letters and messages asking for news of future meetings and clearly demonstrating that much interest had been generated.”ⁱⁱ ISSTIP’s existence was due to “a response to an over-whelming concern with the debilitating effects of excess anxiety and tension experienced by performers in many areas such as music, theatre, sports, public debate, etc.”ⁱⁱⁱ ISSTIP activities over the years have been promoted in many countries besides England such as the USA, Canada, Australia, Singapore, Austria, Greece, Netherlands, France, Belgium, Finland, Slovenia, Cyprus, Norway, Russia, and Portugal.

The 2nd International Conference on Tension in Performance was held from 24-27 July 1983 at the same venue. Of particular interest was the innovative first ISSTIP conference held in the USA in 1986. This conference was dedicated to “Exploring Physical and Psychological Tensions in Performance” and was held at the Westminster Choir College in New Jersey. A subsequent ISSTIP-USA international conference was held across the Atlantic

at Westminster on the theme of “Performance Anxiety” three years later from 10-14 July 1989, organised by Phyllis Lehrer et al.

Amongst other notable ISSTIP conferences were those held at the Royal Festival Hall in October of 1997 and in May of 1999. The most recent international conference was held in London on 17 and 18 July 2007 at Thames Valley University and the Royal Society of Musicians. The second day of the conference was devoted entirely to problems associated with Focal Dystonia.

The 1st International ISSTIP conference gave fodder to the creation of the Journal of the International Society for the Study of Tension in Performance, in November, 1983. Besides the proceedings of the conference, the ISSTIP journals have included book reviews, announcements of similar activities around the world, and other information regarding “tension in performance”.

Intensive Workshops and Seminars began to sprout up under ISSTIP’s auspice. Sometimes they occurred during the International Conferences. The 1st International Forum on “Health and the Performing Arts” took place at the Royal Festival Hall in October of 1997, followed by the second one in May of 1999.

An important and historic event occurred in May of 1990 when the “Performing Arts Clinic” opened at the London College of Music. It was the only such venture of its kind at a music college and was run by a team of specialists who offered their services free to students.

In order to raise awareness and to train professionals with equal attention given to Sports Medicine, Carola created several courses. The first Course on “Health and the Performing Arts – Prevention is Better than Cure” in March of 1992 (see ISSTIP Journal n° 7) at the Thames Valley University was followed by the 2nd Course in March of 1993 at the same place.

Yet another milestone was reached when the 1st ISSTIP Music-Medicine Therapy Certificate Course occurred from 6 October 2002 to 15 June 2003 (see ISSTIP Journal, n° 11). This was the first Music Medicine Therapy Certificate Course in the U. K. A second Course followed in 2003 and an intensive third Course in the same year was held at Trinity College.

Following the Music Medicine Therapy Courses, Carola began the **International Institute of Performing Arts Medicine (IIPAM)**, in 2005, holding monthly seminars. Three seminars constituted a module for certificate of attendance. Distinguished medical specialists as well as musicians, Performing Arts Medicine Therapists, Music Theatre specialists, Psychologists, Physiotherapists, plus Alexander and Feldenkrais specialists were among its members and advisers.

Carola’s own remarkable success in the rehabilitation of musicians with Focal Dystonia is well documented. She tells of an immediate cure of a 15-year old clarinettist who left the clinic “with a correct posture, without pains in her hands and wrists and also knowing how to relax her body and arms, how to relate to the instrument (ergonomics) and, particularly, how to practise.”^{iv} Of special interest are her articles: “Fleisher Syndrome” (ISSTIP Journal n° 9), “The Role of the Thumb” (ISSTIP Journal n° 11); “In touch and in tune with your own body and mind – Grindea Technique” (ISSTIP Journal n° 12); “Focal Dystonia in Guitarists” (with Fiona Clarey in ISSTIP Journal n° 12); and “The Phenomenon of ‘Peak Experience’ of ‘The Flow’ in Musical Performance” (ISSTIP Journal n° 10).

With such precedents as Leon Fleisher and Gary Grafmann, Carola in her charismatic way persuaded musicians to admit to their problems and to seek help. And she provided help. Her now-famous mottos – “Bosoms up!” (for good posture) and “Flop” (for ease in piano performance) – have become unforgettable aids in the prevention of performing artists’ problems. Her books *Tensions in Performance* and *Healthy Piano Technique*, as well as her videos provide ongoing support of her work.^v

In an effort to find that perfect one minute before entering the stage, she devised the **Grindea Technique**, a technique based on Alexander principles and slow exhalation.

“This technique brings perfect alignment of head, neck and back by correcting any imbalance in the body and its stance; it allows freedom of breathing through long, slow exhalations with the body reaching an ideal state of balance (not relaxation). The musician experiences an exhilarating sensation of lightness, of almost floating and there is stillness in the body and in the mind. This is the state of body and mind when a performer experiences peak performance.”^{vi}

Scientific research was done on Carola's technique by using biofeedback as a marker. The efficacy of the method is documented in Katerina Antoniou's Masters thesis *Liberating the Body, Liberating the Mind* (City University, London).

I met Carola in the summer of 1998 at the EPTA conference in Cyprus, as a result of my desire to create a national piano association in Portugal. Because of my fascination with everything Caro had to say, not to mention her vast experience, I had a few piano lessons with her. In turn, she attended my recitals in London. Her piano technique, like much that she learned, changed throughout the years. Her natural approach to the piano used the same technique of a good violinist. Her wise exhortation "Enjoy your mistakes" still rings in my ears.

When Carola came to Portugal in the summer of 2002 to minister a mini-course on her Grindea Technique during my International Piano Festival "Celebrating the Great Pianists" at the University of Aveiro, I was astonished when she told me that she was about to realise her life-long dream - the first UK Certificate Course to train Music-Medicine Therapists. The course that would unite physicians, psychologists, therapists and specialists in various fields as well as musicians. I was astonished for two reasons: one, her vision and perception in the necessity of such a course and its detailed planning and two, her age. She was nearly 90 years old and still so dynamic! It was at this Festival that I will never forget the reaction of one young Czech pianist who burst into tears when Carola got her to release the accumulated tensions.

Another area of fascination for Carola was that of "Peak Experience". She not only was curious about this phenomenon but also about how performing artists – primarily pianists – experienced it. The subject became a centre of investigation for her, complete with questionnaire and interviews, which were recently published in her book *Great Pianists and Pedagogues in Conversation with Carola Grindea* (Kahn & Averill, 2007).

Carola's gift for immediately seeing or feeling where the tension lay in the body and being able to liberate it was also remarkable. She expected her Music-Medicine Therapists to do the same. Like Feldenkrais, she agreed that the body never lies, nor does it forget correct movements. Condensing Alexander, she distilled the essence of his technique

into a quick minute before walking onto the stage, a minute that is both priceless and timeless, a minute known as the "Grindea Technique".

I have learned a lot from Carola, not just about piano playing, releasing tensions or preventing injuries, but about life itself. Her gift for mixing so many people with different backgrounds and yet somehow creating something magical and stimulating was remarkable. Her memory was astonishing, especially when it came to details about people. She loved people. She needed to have people around her.

Carola's gifts are difficult, if not impossible, to replicate. As a born healer and a born educator, she has created something for posterity. Not a dry academic vessel, ISSTIP is proof of her ability to link knowledge with practise, to go beyond prehistoric shamanistic practises and 18th-century postural diseases of the tradesmen to modern techniques that are stripped of all unnecessary gestures.

Where will ISSTIP go now? Carola has certainly laid an excellent foundation. The challenge is now ours. Thank you, Caro.

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SINGING – A CONTINUOUS MUSCULAR MOVEMENT

Raija Roivainen, singer, singing pedagogue

Half-a-century ago, when I started singing studies seriously, I soon started to think, what actually happens in the body during singing. It is true that the airflow from the lungs through the vocal cords creates the initial sound, but it seemed obvious that the eventual singing voice is the result of a complex muscular functioning, and it can be compared with skilful gymnastics or sports performances. Even when the singer's mind is focused to interpret the poet's profound thoughts composed into most divine music, the body is doing ordinary muscular work to produce the singing voice. Already in the late 1950-ies, knowledge of muscular functioning based on research was available and utilized by top-ranking athletes to achieve better results in their training and performance. However, in the teaching of singing this knowledge of physiology was largely neglected.

The forty years' practice as a singing pedagogue has led my ideas of teaching of singing to some extent off the beaten track. Firstly, instead of doing singing, don't do it, let it happen! Secondly, instead of thinking of breath control, don't do it, let it happen. Thirdly, free your mind from all thoughts that cause extra tension, concentrate on the music and the poem! That is all.

The relaxation of muscles

The sports trainers proved that all unnecessary action, extra doing, like stiff postures and tension have to be eliminated when aiming for top performance. One has to observe all bodily movements, and especially those which unobserved would hinder from reaching the best performance. The muscle is the driving force for all bodily movements, so, any single muscular action has an effect on singing too:

- 1. Any posture, whatsoever, causes tension to the muscle. The muscle keeps its elasticity only in the state of relaxation.
- 2. Movement of the muscle keeps it elastic and ready for function. It leads to ask, whether vibrato, the slight movement of

vocal cords is the nature's own way to protect the small muscles from damage and keep them in singing condition for hours.

- 3. Extreme contraction of the muscle as well as extreme stretching of it will endanger the health of the muscle.
- 4. The muscle in continuous elastic movement is always safe, as far as it is not overstrained by practice.

Leaning on these simple guidelines, I had the courage to start to explore the limits of my own voice. I felt sure that keeping in mind these rules, my voice could not be damaged.

Getting free of conscious breath control

One of the most interesting areas to explore was breathing. The act of breathing seemed to be a mysterious world with various orthodox schools and schoolmasters each of them having the secret formula, how to breathe. The young student of singing could only wonder how the voice of a petite soprano could be equally carrying with that of a giant bass in a big opera house. The audible singing voice is sound waves or vibrations that travel through the air to our ears. Would it not be logical that the more air, the more sound waves, i.e. the bigger voice? Why the small soprano with small lungs is not in trouble beside the big bass who has twice as big lungs? The soprano also seems to sing equally long phrases, she does not need to breathe at shorter intervals than the male colleague. She does not need to enrol in smaller opera houses to make her voice carry.

These questions lead inevitably to take a closer look at the basic principles of breathing. Elementary textbooks of biology say, that the primary function of breathing is to inhale oxygen for the energy needs of the body and exhale carbon dioxide out of the body. Breathing is regulated by the respiratory centre located in the brainstem. This centre automatically

sends orders via the nerves to regulate the rate and depth of breathing thus maintaining the optimal levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the blood. The need for oxygen varies immensely depending on the ongoing activity. Even during singing, the main task of breathing is to maintain the optimal gas exchange of the blood. This basic principle does not occur foremost when singing pedagogues deal with breathing.

The textbooks tell further that muscular activity consumes oxygen. The bigger the muscles in action, or the heavier the work to be done, the more oxygen is needed for the muscles. When we are digging a ditch or jogging, the heart pulse quickens and pumps more blood containing oxygen into the muscles. In singing, relatively small muscles play the leading role, and the oxygen consumption is rather low. Therefore, excessive air intake during singing is not only unnecessary but downright a hindrance to good singing. Special breathing for singing that could be practiced or taught, does not exist. It is the unconscious control of breathing that chooses the best suitable breath rate and depth in each case, whether you are jogging or singing, with the condition that the muscles of the body are otherwise free from unnecessary tension.

If the unconscious control of breathing is so ingenious, why did it not always run smoothly? Particularly at the early stage of singing studies one had to take air after each two bars or so. Several reasons can be found. If the singing muscles have had little use, they are untrained and weak, therefore it takes certain time to train and strengthen them. To produce the voice, the student tends to substitute the incapacity of muscles by pushing more air against the vocal cords. This habit, however, is apt to make the free function of the vocal cords more difficult. Letting the pharynx open like in yawning, will help the student to free the movability of the pharynx and thus gradually to discover the proper functioning of the complex musculature of the larynx. Singing high, or singing low, the feeling and movement of yawn should remain. The pharynx must have the freedom of movement both horizontally and vertically.

Worrying about the inadequacy of air intake does not always stop although the voice grows bigger and better. Why do even advanced and experienced singers sometimes have problems with breathing? One common reason is the state of mind during the performance. How to keep your mind apart from breathing? Once you have entered the stage, the

interpretation of the song is the one and only thing to fill your mind. Concentrate upon the poems and the music, and let them captivate your body and mind, and consequently your art will captivate the audience. Do not make the mistake of thinking how to perform the "task of singing."

The interaction between the body and the mind

Wilhelm Reich, the Austrian psychiatrist and psychoanalyst studied among others the interaction between the state of mind and the body muscles. For a singer, the emotional tension reflected in the muscles has an immediate effect on breathing and further on the voice. Having learned from the sports training, that movement, even a slight one, will release the muscles from tension, I drew a conclusion that moving the body during singing will help to unlock the voice.

Initially, large, slow movement revealed the locations of the tense muscles of the body. Eventually, I remember practising the aria of the Queen of the Night? bending deep from the waist and dangling my head between the knees. How easy it felt to sing that aria! The exercise can continue bending the upper body from the waist to the right side and to the left side or lying on one's back and letting the head and upper chest hang over the edge of the bed. It is easy to observe, which muscles are tense and seem at first to resist the state of relaxation and movement needed for optimal singing. The muscles should be as close as possible to their state of rest. Singing is not forced but rather allowed to happen. The movement flows from one muscle to another during singing. The singer may be more or less bound to stand still during the performance, but there is always a possibility to slight movement, which will immediately release the undesirable tension and lets the singer continue the free and relaxed singing.

All muscles involved in singing must be free from extra doing. One of the most common extra doings is the "support of voice" or the "support of breath", regardless of the means by which it is done. From a mirror you can observe the possible extra doing by the tongue or the soft palate. The jaw and the upper muscles of the tongue bone can be palpated by hands. The facial muscles express our state of mind and thoughts. If you have been taught to sing with "smiling lips" or with other facial posing with the aim of easier singing or equalisation of the vowels, your singing may turn into gymnastics instead of deep interpretation which moves the facial muscles in a natural way. Facial muscles that express

our state of mind, should not participate in the production of voice. Singing many different songs with different melodic and dynamic qualities and varying emotional contents, is the best way to train the singing muscles and strengthen them in good balance.

The influence of the psyche on the functioning of the singing muscles cannot be overestimated. The body and the mind can be compared with the problem of the "chicken and the egg", which one was first? Tension of the mind is reflected in the muscles, and reciprocally the muscular tension is reflected in the state of mind. The problems can be tackled from either direction. However, for a singer it may be easier to observe and eliminate the muscular tension. With the guidance of the experienced singing pedagogue the singer can safely explore his or her voice, and deepen his or her own personality.

Who is Raija Roivainen ?

Raija Roivainen is a Finnish mezzo-soprano and singing pedagogue. After graduation from the Sibelius-Academy, Helsinki, she made her Finnish Lieder-debut in 1969 and London debut in Wigmore Hall in 1976, and thereafter she has given many recitals in Purcell Room, London, and in the Recital

Hall at Carnegie Hall, New York, among others. Besides her concert singer's career, she enjoys a reputation as a singing pedagogue. After retirement from the Tampere Conservatoire, she published a book on singing ("Laulamisen sietämätön helppous", 2003), for the moment in Finnish only. The above text is excerpts from the book, the title of which in English is "The Unbearable Ease of Singing".

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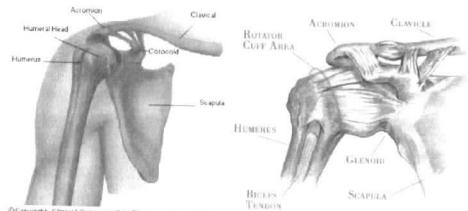
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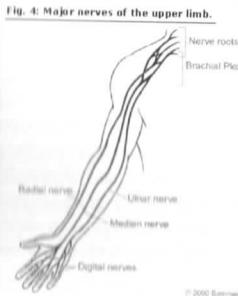
a short overview of anatomy and painful conditions

Carrying some of the 'burdens' of one's balanced posture, the shoulder joint - or to be more accurate, the shoulder girdle - is of paramount importance. It connects the arms to the upper body and, it is an intermediate channel for routes that start in our brain and neck and terminate at the tips of our fingers. The principal role of the shoulder is to put the hand into virtually any position necessary and for this, it has a big almost universal range of movement, the biggest of all other joints of the human body.

To achieve this range of movement, the shoulder joint is made up of bones with their articular surfaces - **humerus, clavicle, scapula** - and also of a complex system of ligaments, tendons and muscles that surround and connect the bony parts. Strictly speaking, one should consider the shoulder girdle as a system of joints - or articulations - between the scapular glenoid socket and the humeral head (**glenohumeral joint**), the scapular acromion and the distal end of the clavicle (**acromio-clavicular joint**), the scapular acromion and the humeral head (**sub-acromial joint**), but also between the proximal end of the clavicle and the sternum (**sterno-clavicular joint**) and between the scapula and the rib cage (**scapulo-thoracic joint**). For the achievement of the huge range of movement of our shoulders, all these articulations work simultaneously and in co-ordination.



In addition to the comprehensive structure of the shoulder, it is through its narrow passages that the big arteries and veins pass to bring blood to and from our arms and it is here that the most delicate nerves that descend from our neck squeeze in between and continue all the way to our arms, hands and fingers.



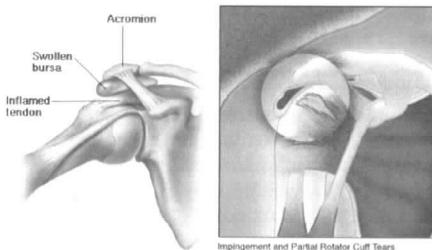
Shoulder pain can be the result of a variety of causes such as nerve irritation from the neck, arthritis of the shoulder articulations, instabilities, bursitis but also causes that originate from the heart, the lung and also the diaphragm. Shoulder pain is a big chapter in the medical books and specialist guidance is often sought in order to make the most accurate diagnosis and offer the best advice and treatment. For the purposes however, of assessing a performer's symptom, or symptoms, it is vital to be familiar with the basic conditions that may affect this multi-joint.

Neck problems such as disorders of the cervical spine and the nerve roots that emerge from this level of the spine can cause 'referred' pain to the shoulder area. It is not unusual for bad neck positions and repetitive 'wrong' neck movements to produce pain not only in the neck area but also further away in the area towards the shoulder blades and the shoulders. Careful examination and possibly further investigations are required to differentiate the origin of this pain in order to proceed to the appropriate treatment.

Conditions affecting the acromio-clavicular joint with most common reference to the degenerative arthritis are often encountered in shoulder sufferers. This joint is very susceptible to wear and tear which is not, as many may believe, due to carrying heavy items or engaging the shoulder into demanding physical work. Mostly this joint is affected by the small repetitive stresses over a long period of time and it is therefore of prime importance to bear this

in mind when shoulder pain appears in musicians or other performers who use their shoulders repetitively for long hours even without strenuous forces.

Conditions affecting the sub-acromial joint produce the majority of shoulder pain. It is the anatomical peculiarity of this joint that allows for the frequent complaints. In this joint the space between the bony scapular acromion from above and the bony humeral head from below is occupied by soft tissues: the tendon of the biceps muscle and the tendons of the rotator muscles (known as the rotator cuff) as well as the large sub-acromial bursa (a fluid filled structure). Here in the sub-acromial space the conditions known as 'bursitis' and 'tendonitis' occur as well as the 'impingement syndrome'. Specialist diagnosis is crucial in establishing the source of the pain and advising the best possible treatment for what may be a persisting and limiting condition.



Arthritis and other inflammatory diseases may affect the shoulder joint and particularly the gleno-humeral joint like any other joint in the body. Again with the exact diagnosis and the appropriate

treatments, shoulder pain due to these causes can be relieved substantially and function restored. As in all medical disorders early detection and evaluation of symptoms is essential for the optimum therapeutic result.

One should also be aware that the shoulders with their unique anatomy and movement are prone to **injuries and dislocations**. We see these conditions more often in sports people and physical performers as a result of direct trauma or strenuous movements. In the case of musicians one can only expect the average rate of trauma as in the general population. However, should trauma happen in a musician's shoulder it may prove devastating and it will affect performance for a prolonged period of time. Specialist treatment and rehabilitation becomes necessary in order to avoid side-effects and reduce the recuperation time to the minimum.

As one can see, the humerus is literally 'hanging' from the scapula with the help of the soft structures. It is therefore understandable how the shoulder joint can be predisposed to **instability**, a condition that allows the joint to come out of its anatomical position. Shoulder instability can be painful but it can also be painless, it can be acute or chronic (habitual). Whatever its presentation it should be addressed as soon as possible as it can lead to secondary painful conditions. Prevention is vital in order to preserve stability and adequate support of the whole arm. Strengthening techniques and correct positioning and mobilisation of the shoulder joint is one lesson that the musician has to learn well in the early stages of playing and maintain through the

Developing the piano technique: optimal and rational aspects

Damjana Zupan

Many occupational disorders in pianists as well as various methods of resolving them, prove the necessity of a holistic approach in developing the piano technique. This results in the maintaining and strengthening of psychophysical vitality of pianists as well as their successful and confident performing. There are several factors which hinder pianists from reaching their goal and which they cannot influence directly. Yet, even in the frame of such hindrances, we can find optimal and rational solutions. These can enable – from the little fingers onwards – a freedom and quality in the piano playing. As F. M. Alexander would say, the right solution can make a “maximum effect by using a minimum effort”.

1 The causes of pianists' problems

The greatest musicians of the era of pianism are well known for their virtuosity and famous for their immortal compositions, although less is known or appreciated of the cost they had to pay for living the profession they loved. Many of them had to go through much trouble that very often was detrimental to their career path. Frederic Chopin suffered so badly from stage fright that in 30 years he only performed publicly 30 times. Schumann went through much turmoil because of his little fingers that did not obey. Similar problems affected Scriabin who lost his desire for performing. Similarly, Gould, Fleisher, Graffman and many others, knowingly or not, most presumably suffered from focal dystonia, a big threat for musicians. Several others, be it in the 19th, 20th or 21st Centuries had experienced at least once in their career pain, or even injury, from the many hours of practising and performing.

There are many factors that reduce pianists' effective performance including the constant repeating of similar or even the same movements as well as an overload of putting too much pressure on certain parts of the body neglecting other muscles at the same time. The other physical and mental loads and strains during the concert tours includes: stage fright, high expectation from colleagues and oneself, audience, critics, not to mention busy schedules, changing of time zones, non acoustic

halls, unsuitable temperature, humidity of the halls, instruments in a bad condition, etc. Especially threatening is playing an instrument in a forced position and often, which is only made even worse, by using unhealthy technique.

Specific problems and medical diseases as a consequence of physiological and mental occupational loads and strains result in malfunctioning of the musculoskeletal system, and may be manifested as:

- pain syndrome of the spine and shoulder girdles
- focal dystonia
- occupational overuse syndrome
- wrist, elbow and thoracic outlet entrapment neuropathies
- hearing damage
- tension headaches
- depression, nervous break down etc.

The cause for the most of the trouble is within musicians themselves. This may be the case of the Canadian pianist Glenn Gould, who ceased performing at the age of 33. His personality and piano technique have influenced the path of his career. Gould was a hermit, he mostly practised at night. Fascinated by the recording technology he stated that “going to concerts is old fashioned” which many believe was an excuse for not playing in public. Some of his reasons for leaving his

performance stage so early we can find in his diaries as well as an indication that he suffered from bad posture when playing the piano.

Gould was sitting unusually low, on the chair which his father made for him. Since the age of ten he used a finger technique which he learned from his teacher Guerrero at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Parallel to that he studied organ, which also influenced his way of thinking and playing. Such a technique enabled him to play baroque and a repertoire of some 20th Century composers, but was not sufficient for romantic styles, which demands playing with arm weight and the cooperation of the entire body. Gould was aware of these deficiencies yet he refused to change his technique. Besides that, he had – as with everything in his life – an intimate relationship with his piano, which can also be seen from his body position when he played. His upper body was turned towards the piano with his head bent over towards keyboard. Every positioning of the spine downwards also relates to the downward positioning of the arms. Therefore, an additional (otherwise unnecessary) force of the muscles is needed to bring forearm into the position parallel with the piano keyboard. At the same time, the muscles of the neck and the shoulder girdle are heavily overloaded with a risk of causing pain and injury.

At one occasion, Gould had trouble convincing Steinway piano technicians to soften the piano mechanism (his technique could not resist heavy pianos). When they finally came to an agreement, the technician warmly patted Gould's shoulder. However, Gould did not appreciate this as a friendly gesture. Rather he understood it as a cause of immense pain in his shoulder which followed soon after. He sued the Steinway company and got an immense amount of money for that. In truth, we can conclude that today, this pain was most likely a final consequence of the problems which harmed Gould for a long time due to his wrong piano technique. The technician's gesture was only the last lever of the mechanism, which was due to activate. If the music medicine was as well developed as today, at the time the technicians would have saved a lot of money because they would have had enough evidence to avoid the penalty.

2 Optimal and rational developing of the piano technique

Developing a musicianship, imagination and knowledge about how to articulate and interpret

music as well as the technical abilities to play an instrument, give musicians stability and faith in their work. However, there is always the threat that negative thinking will instantly harm this authority. What is to be done in order to get rid of the unnecessary worries that can harm our performance? The latest fashion is to be ‘relaxed’, but we can be completely relaxed in a deep sleep only. When we are awake we need a certain amount of tension to enable focus on what we do. There may be positive and negative tensions in our body and mind, and it is very important to be able to distinguish between them. Positive tensions enable us to be effective, the negative hinder us from achieving our planned goals.

When playing piano and performing we must be able to let go of the negative thoughts and tensions, and to maintain and direct the positive tensions towards the wished goal. In order to achieve that, we need marking of our space and the balanced proportion of tensions within this space. Our first space is the one within our body – there must be awareness of the musculoskeletal system alongside with the searching for the physiological and mental balancing (body mapping – awareness of the bodily parts, of the sitting posture while playing, awareness of breathing). After this stability is found we can develop a relationship with the music, make one with the piano, find a connection with the place in which we play and, at the same time, regulate the influences from the environment. The stability in the relationship with what is happening around us is also important. It is interesting that someone may recognize a certain action as stressful, but at the same time someone else may (even) take the same action as a pleasure. The moment we recognize a situation as stressful is accompanied by negative tensions which may last even long after the cause for stress is over. It is therefore very important to objectively recognize what is and what is not threatening us. Of course, practising this awareness as well as practising techniques of ‘letting go’ must be a patient and an ongoing process.

2.1 Sitting

The natural gate of a human being is an upright posture. Sitting at the piano is already an adaptation of the human body which demands additional efforts and seeking of the optimal results within the given limits. Unfortunately, too often a pianist's body does not feel comfortable in the given position and situation. The language of a sitting body not being comfortably given support from the chair, and the feet not being at one with the floor (or with

the pedal) is a symbol for a pianist unconsciously wishing to run away from the given situation.

While we sit, we must be in the centre of the gravity axes. This axes starts in the AO point (atlanto-occipital joint – a connection of the skull with the first neck vertebra). This point can be found by imagining a middle of the imaginary line between the both ears. The axes continues towards the middle of the chest through the centre of the bottom of pelvis and ends up in between feet. At this point one feels a connection and a total balance of the head, neck and the spine. The entire body is released from any disproportion in the posture.

The chair must enable healthy sitting. The height of the chair must suit the lower arm to be parallel to the keyboard. It is recommended for little children to use a device to put feet on it and feel support from beneath. Some children are mentally capable of playing pieces with pedal yet their physical body is not prepared. It is highly recommended to use such device that enables comfortable playing with the pedal. Although most often, children not given this chance, are forced to play in a half standing position when pedalling. The negative tensions which are built at this time are unfortunately not avoidable. However, these tensions should no longer be present when the pianist grows big enough to use pedal normally! The body fits into the limits of inappropriate posture very quickly but it takes a long time to get rid of bad habits. A constant awareness of movements and posture is necessary as well as a permanent releasing of negative tensions in the body (when it hurts it is already too late!).

2.2 Breathing

When experiencing a stressful situation, the body responds with several physiological processes: the heart beat increases to transfer blood from the limbs to those muscles enabling for a physical fight with the situation or for running away from it. Several physiological reactions follow this response: hands and feet become cold, occasionally also sweaty. The mouth is sore and breathing is shallow. These processes served well to the ancient man, but in main cases they are not helpful and even disturbing in the contemporary stressful situations. One can not physically fight with the audience, neither can one run away from the stage! Instead, one has to develop a capability to recognize bodily changes, understand them and regulate to reduce their disturbing influence.

Breathing as a physiological process can drastically change on experiencing a stressful situation; pianists are not consciously enough aware of breathing, even though this can be the main cause of problems. As the (technical) demands of playing increase, the breathing becomes shallow and the pianist 'forgets' to breathe. The brain is therefore not sufficiently supplied with oxygen, muscles start to tense up, there are more and more negative tensions in the body. If the pianist does not know how to control this consciously, then the body itself finds an appropriate solution. A memory hole in the brain is a natural consequence of too little oxygen in the brain and the tense body forces the pianist to stop playing. At that moment the body is given the possibility to get enough air in the lungs, which supplies the brain with oxygen, releases the body from negative tensions and gives it the capability of continuing to play.

Breathing is a source of a physiological and mental well being. One should feel how breath is reaching the area of diaphragm and the bottom of pelvis. One experiences the freeing from all the negative tensions in the body. The shoulders are dropped and one feels the widening of the back. Rhythmic, even and calm breathing enables an even circulating of the blood throughout the entire body which is also a basis for a focused thinking.

2.3 Being at one with the piano

Conscious awareness of the physiological and mental processes in the body leads to the experiencing of a connection between the head, neck and the spine reaching towards an upward direction. Sitting in an erect position, arms hang from the shoulders and feel weightless, the lower arms are positioned parallel to keyboard, fingers are flat on the keys, legs and feet are given enough support from beneath, giving the body a downwards direction. In this bodily state one is physically and mentally prepared for an active relationship with the piano.

The traditional understanding of the playing with the arm weight must also be properly formulated. The sound is being produced before the finger (and the arm) reaches the bottom of the key. The movement of the wrist in a downward direction, after the sound is being produced, serves only to release all tensions needed for a sound. Lifting of the wrist afterwards, brings new tensions needed for the next sound. Of course, one can observe this only in slow playing, but even at 'normal' speed the slight movement of the wrist is constant. The flexibility of the wrist can be understood as pianists' lungs, as also described by

Franz Liszt and Carola Grindea.

2.4 Being at one with the space

It is not enough to feel the flexibility of the body in the relationship with the piano only. Even when playing and focusing on certain movements, the body has to be at every instance ready to reach out. This gives the ability of playing at the bottom, middle and top of the piano keyboard, and a feeling of lightness and flexibility that would reflect on the listener. This flexibility can be tested by trying to get the playing pianist's arm away from the piano. A convulsive arm, not ready to cooperate with an outside movement, shows an amount of further negative tensions of the body; this probably also results in a harsh sound.

The body needs to feel well also when moving away from the piano. The way of walking on (and off) the stage is not only giving an inner stability to the performer but also gives a sensation of security and trust to the audience. To practice this sensation it is the best to focus the awareness to the slight pelvic movements which make the lines of a horizontally laid figure eight (∞ – which is also the symbol of infinity).

The sound must also reach out from the limits of the piano box. Creative visualisation helps to avoid fading away of the sound after pressing the key. It also enables to project the sound in the space, to 'hug' the audience.

3 Conclusion

The most important thing when playing the piano and performing is to enable oneself not to be distracted even by a very fragile situation. Reactions to any influence from the outside environment should not in a moment destroy everything what was built throughout many hours of practising for the performance. Finally, the pianist Sviatoslav Richter, thought by many as the top interpreter of the 20th Century, was satisfied with any instrument. He humbly played in basements, on the out of tune pianos, and after many years of playing throughout Soviet Union, he was to enter the biggest concert halls of the world and experience a warm welcome from their audiences. His hearty devotion to the music and his patient work can be a good example for everyone: to be open for everything that is yet waiting to be discovered, researched and lived.

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Potential Physiological Hazards of Violin Playing

Emma Peake

Extracted from MA dissertation “A Study of the Musician in Injury (with Specific Reference to the Violinist), Exploring Contributing Factors, Strategies for Avoidance and the Consequences of Injury”

Violin playing is undoubtedly a complex physiological feat and to play at a high standard the violinist has to execute the same actions, at times, for many hours a day. Furthermore, when played, the violin is held in a position that, even when held correctly, is not natural to the human body; the player's left arm is raised at the elbow forcing blood to flow anti gravitationally. In doing so the position of the body is not balanced-sides are asymmetrical-not a favoured position for the symmetrically based human body. If the posture is not correct or if unnecessary tensions are present many skeletal and muscular dysfunctions may occur.

There are varieties of specific physiological hazards that the violinist should be aware of. When these are investigated, it is easy to see how a violinist could suffer with pains, but more importantly, it is by being aware of them that their avoidance can be learnt. There is much potential for maintaining unnecessary tension in violin playing. Constant tension between the thumb and the index finger on the left hand is commonplace, making clean shifting impossible and inviting injuries such as Tendonitis and Tenosynovitis. A vibrato is often more akin to symptoms of an electric shock than a beautiful cantabile tone as it is not produced by fine, soft movements, but by the muscles in the forearm being in a constant state of tension, again welcoming inflammation of the tendon and nerve irritation.

Trills are often executed by over tensing the hand and digits involved and it is commonplace for a finger to be placed on the fingerboard with tension and for that tension to be maintained. However, after the action has been executed the tension must be immediately released. The finger should be “dropped” onto the fingerboard and not held down.

The lower jaw often holds the violin by using continual tension thus strangling the violin and straining the player's neck and shoulder muscles which over time could lead to Tendonitis, Rotator Cuff Syndrome and Thoracic Outlet Syndrome and in some cases the nerve could be squashed and lead to Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. The bow is often held tightly and the major culprit is often the thumb-refusing to allow the natural shape of the hand to envelop the bow, instead gripping it tightly with a rigid, straight thumb. Tension held in this way could lead to De Quervain's Tendonitis. This type of thumb could be a trigger to many further problems if not rectified. The elbow, shoulder, neck and back could all subsequently be affected. Staccato bowing is also often executed using excess tension resulting in uneven, untidy playing, a harsh tone and a plethora of injuries. Any excess tension even in the lower body will eventually affect the violinist's playing ability.

Locked knees create unwanted tension in the lower back which will travel through the spine to the neck and once the brachial plexus is affected nerves may be impinged thus creating pain in the shoulders, elbows, wrists and hands.

Here follows some of the problems with posture and tension that can prevail in violin playing. Included are photographs of advanced players in pain and young violinists with postural problems that if not addressed could suffer the same ailments as their seniors.

General Stance

These players maintain poor general postures all of which are extremely common:

“Waiting for a Bus”. Unbalanced body:



“The Precipice”. Upper body is leaning forward:



Neck

If the neck is not in perfect alignment with the spine and harbours unnecessary tensions there will doubtlessly be problems. Here, the head is tilted at an awkward angle and the neck is rigid not allowing any freedom.



“The Twist”. The body is twisted at the waist causing physical problems in a college student:



Head pushed forward:



Jaw

Another common problem is that of the jaw. The jaws can be clenched tightly together in order to “grip” the violin, or the lower jaw can be pushed forward to attempt the same.

Player's right side

The shoulder may be raised and/or projected forward. If tension is held in the elbow the bow may not remain parallel to the bridge but instead glide across the fingerboard at the point.

The 'grip' on this bow is too tight; the thumb is rigid and is applying too much counter pressure:



Player's left side

Shoulder

The shoulder may be raised and/or projected forward.

The violin may not be placed correctly on the shoulder but more on the chest prohibiting any movement of the shoulder and interfering with the arm's natural hanging position under the violin. The violinist is often not fitted out with the appropriate chin rest/ shoulder rest and this can lead to many physical problems.

Elbow

The elbow may be resting into the body prohibiting freedom.

Wrist

Often the violinist's wrist is bent thus squashing tendons or conversely this wrist is too far out putting strain on muscles in the forearm and related tendons:



Hand

Here, tension is clearly present between the thumb and index finger. They are gripping the neck of the violin:



It is this excess tension and ill positioning of the hand that is causing unnecessary tension in the elbow. As a result, the arm is not hanging in its natural position thus making fingers stretch excessively for the G-string.



Some of these young players are already in pain; some are even too uncomfortable to carry on with their usual playing activities. For those who are not if they were to continue with these poor postures and with so much unnecessary tension they would undoubtedly follow the same path.

Although there are undoubtedly potential hazards in violin playing there is much that the musician can do to avoid such problems. The musician needs to prepare both mind and body for playing; warm-up activities and stretches must be carried out. Warmed-up muscles lead to warmed-up tendons and ligaments etc. It is when muscles and tendons are not warm that they are most likely to injure. A warm muscle is soft and malleable whereas a cold one is not: if a piece of frozen chicken were thrown to the floor would it break? It probably would. However, if a defrosted, soft piece were thrown would that break? Probably not. For muscles to be warm they need a constant

supply of blood. Moving the body allows the blood to circulate-pumping blood from the heart into the muscles making them warm. There are many ways that muscles can be warmed up without continually visiting the gym. The music student can walk briskly to class or if the musician is practicing at home a quick run up and down the stairs a couple or three times would improve blood circulation. Any activity that gets the heart pumping therefore pushing blood around the body would suffice. Just as the musician must learn that muscles need to be stretched and prepared for such a strenuous activity as playing a musical instrument, they must also learn that they need to warm down afterwards. Just as they learnt to pack their instruments away after use they must learn to pack up their bodies too; the muscles warm down by stretching them in the opposing way to which they have been used. To be truly effective such habits need to be formed from the outset of learning; the player needs to be taught such routines in the instrumental lesson.

To diminish the possibility of any future playing related injury an holistic approach to teaching needs to be followed. The process of playing a musical instrument is not merely about the brain and hands; an holistic approach to teaching involves considering all the many elements that contribute to the human composition-the physical, the psychological and any needs peculiar to the individual. Ergonomics need to be addressed and the student's relationship with the instrument (violin size and structure) and its accessories (shoulder and chin rests), need to be constantly reviewed and where necessary amended. During the first lesson the violin should be set up in a correct/ natural position. The student must be aware that the human body does not contort when playing the violin nor should the body ever experience prolonged discomfort. If playing is uncomfortable something is wrong-discomfort is the human body's way of telling us that something is not right.

A simple activity that will address the importance of the posture and ergonomics follows: stand the student in front of a mirror, feet slightly apart; point out that each hip is positioned above each foot and that each shoulder is above each hip and that the head is simply resting in the middle. This is the perfectly aligned body. Then, take the violin to that perfectly aligned body, add sponges and remove or change the chin rest to as not to change that perfect shape. Make all these amendments whilst the student is standing in front of the mirror. With

understanding, the youngest student will realise that the instrument is fitted to the body not the body to the instrument. With such issues addressed from the very beginning of violin learning many of the potential hazards of violin playing can only be diminished and if all players were to learn such vital lessons from the outset one can only foresee a great reduction in the harrowing statistics that represent the mass of today's violinists suffering with unnecessary playing related pains.

Extracted from MA dissertation "*A Study of the Musician in Injury (with Specific Reference to the Violinist), Exploring Contributing Factors, Strategies for Avoidance and the Consequences of Injury*".

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Perfectionism

Andy Evans

Performers constantly strive for high standards, and so the idea of perfectionism seems understandable on the face of it. Surely, an attention to detail and a ruthless search for the best way to carry out a technical manoeuvre must be a good thing? In practice, however, perfectionism may be more of a scourge than a help when it starts to interfere with artistic judgement, the flow of ideas and the necessity to carry out a consistent practice plan.

The danger here is that too much time may be taken on worrying over details than actually carrying out tasks. Additionally, there is a crucial difference between performing a task perfectly, which is the kind of technical mastery successful performers have, and trying to live up to an 'image' of being perfect, which is where the problems start.

General features of perfectionism

Perfectionism, in psychology, revolves around the idea that it is important to do things perfectly. Some psychologists use the term solely in a negative way – as a pathological form, where anything less than perfect is unacceptable, while others separate functional perfectionists or "high achievers" from maladaptive perfectionists who are hung up on perfection. Thus Hamachek (cited by Parker & Adkins 1994) describes these two types as "normal" – those who "derive a very real sense of pleasure from the labours of a painstaking effort", and "neurotic" – those who are "unable to feel satisfaction because in their own eyes they never seem to do things [well] enough to warrant that feeling". Burns in the same volume describes perfectionists as straining "compulsively and unremittingly toward impossible goals" and measuring their own worth "entirely in terms of productivity and accomplishment".

Perfectionists are also obsessive and workaholics who strive for constant control over their insecurities, according to Mallinger & DeWyze 1992. Their constant vigilance is a defence that gives them the feeling they are beyond reproach and protected against bad occurrences. This interpretation is of a person subject to sub-conscious drives which may seem irrational to the conscious mind.

What, then are the features of this unfortunate condition? Adderholt-Elliott (1989) describes five characteristics contributing to underachievement: procrastination, fear of failure, the all-or-nothing mindset, paralysed perfectionism, and workaholism. Slaney (1996) created the Almost Perfect scale, which includes the variables: Standards and Order, Relationships, Anxiety, and Procrastination. Slaney found both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionists rated highly in Standards and Order, but maladaptive perfectionists also rate highly in Anxiety and Procrastination.

A picture emerges of an individual at war with himself – striving for control yet procrastinating, wanting perfection but getting anxiety instead, as the dream of perfection turns into finicky behaviour and confrontational responses to criticism. In its pathological form perfectionism can be very damaging - inability to start a project before knowing the 'right' way to do it, and low self esteem focussing on feelings of poor performance and stupidity. It is also a risk factor for obsessive-compulsive disorder, eating disorders, and clinical depression.

The idea of "healthy perfectionists" emerges again with Roedell (1984), who describes them as gifted children showing drive and energy and becoming achievers rather than procrastinators. Referring to high achievers as "healthy perfectionists", however, may be partly misleading since perfectionism is all too often shown in low productivity as time and energy are lost on small details.

The Website about.com, under Health>Stress Management>Perfectionism again distinguishes the high achiever from the perfectionist, who is identified by ten factors:

All-Or-Nothing Thinking: a high achiever can be satisfied with doing a great job even if their very high goals are not completely met. Perfectionists will accept nothing less than perfection. 'Almost perfect' is seen as failure.

Critical Eye: Perfectionists are critical of themselves and their imperfections - high achievers take pride in their work

"Push" vs. "Pull": High achievers tend to be pulled toward their goals; perfectionists tend to be pushed toward their goals by a fear of not reaching them.

Unrealistic Standards: The perfectionist's goals aren't always even reasonable - if they set their initial goals out of reach they have no satisfaction in the pursuit of goals.

Focus on Results: High achievers can enjoy the process of chasing a goal; perfectionists see the goal and nothing else.

Depressed by Unmet Goals: Perfectionists are more unhappy than high achievers.

Fear of Failure: Perfectionists are much more afraid to fail than high achievers since they place so much stock in results and become so disappointed by anything less than perfection.

Procrastination: comes through fear of doing badly and is detrimental to productivity. Worry about doing something imperfectly becomes failure to do anything at all! This leads to more feelings of failure, and a vicious cycle is thus set up.

Defensiveness: Because a less-than-perfect performance is so scary, perfectionists tend to take constructive criticism defensively, while high achievers can see criticism as valuable information to help their future performance.

Low Self Esteem: While high achievers tend to have high esteem, perfectionists are self-critical and unhappy, can become lonely or isolated as their critical nature and rigidity push others away, and this in turn can lead to lower self-esteem.

Where does Perfectionism come from?

It is possible that perfectionism has a genetic component and also that it may run in families - parents who practice an authoritarian style combined with conditional love may contribute to perfectionism in their children (Castro & Rice 2003). The standards for such perfection may be set by parents, or siblings and peers for whom there is a high degree of envy and obsessive competition, or by artistic role models (Heifetz for violinists, for instance) one strives to emulate.

The most imaginative artists can even create a nearly-believed-in perfect fantasy version of themselves, incorporating envied physical and mental features of others, which becomes more and more dissociated from their real values and attributes. This is like an identikit collage - this nose, that torso, those eyes, that voice. The idea becomes even more pervasive when plastic surgeons

can actually give you your menu of desired features, and show business is getting flooded with surgical enhancements.

In dancers, the search for the perfect image can lead to widespread weight disorders and the delusions of anorexia, where the wafer thin person feels fat and bloated. There are great dangers in following the chimeric world of images, which saturate our media society.

Methods of testing for perfectionism

Perfectionism, in the 16 Personality Factors identified by Raymond Cattell, appears to be related to Conscientiousness and Neuroticism. The 16PF can also be used to calculate another perfectionist type - Belbin's "Completer Finisher". Belbin's 1981 book Management Teams presented 8 types of team members deriving from his work studying management teams during business games, and his definition of the Completer Finisher (one of the Introverted roles) is: "Painstaking, conscientious, anxious. Searches out errors and omissions. Delivers on time. Inclined to worry unduly. Reluctant to delegate". The detail person within the team, they have a meticulous approach, make steady effort and tend to be the over-anxious perfectionist who worries about everything and maintains a permanent sense of urgency.

Results for Performers

The data in Evans A, 2003 "Secrets of Performing Confidence" includes ratings of 298 performers on Cattell and Belbin, as above, and shows that though performers are high on creativity, which is achievement oriented, they are also a little above the expected population average figure of 5.5 on perfectionism. The total performer score was 6.2, of which Actors and Unemployed Artists scored 5.6, Popular Musicians 6.2, Dancers 6.3 and Classical Musicians 6.6.

So the conclusion of these findings seems to be that they correlate fairly predictably with the standards of perfection set for these different art forms. Dancers and classical musicians have a history of conscientious practice patterns, while dancers additionally have a history of eating disorders and physical image issues. If we look at Neuroticism on the 16PF, classical musicians are also the highest at 6.0 while dancers score 5.4, but if we look at Conscientiousness dancers are higher at 5.5 than classical musicians at 5.1. On this scale, actors are as low as 3.7.

How does Perfectionism correlate with success?

The author has found by examining his database of personality profiles that many of the most successful performers are normal or even low on perfectionism, while those who have dropped out or had career instability or psychosomatic problems score extremely high. This appears to confirm the relationship with worry, underachievement and paralysed perfectionism. Nevertheless, a small number of high achievers also scored high on perfectionism. Since Belbin's Completer score is biased towards high anxiety it may not be clear whether it is anxiety itself that gives the high scores in these highly-strung individuals, or perfectionism and its resultant worries.

Treatment

The Website about.com, under Health>Stress Management>Perfectionism suggests -

Make a Cost-Benefit Analysis: What are your perfectionist traits costing you?

Become Aware of Your Tendencies: Make a list and analyse it - even blog it!

See the Positive: Making a conscious effort to notice all that is good with your work

Alter Your Self-Talk: Still that critical voice in the head - it wrecks your self esteem

Take Baby Steps: Allow a learning curve and leave room for error

Enjoy the Process: Focus on the process towards a goal, and value the steps you take

Learn to Handle Criticism: Constructive criticism can improve your performance.

Typical of perfectionism is the cognitive distortion known as "all-or-nothing" thinking where the client believes that an achievement is either perfect or useless. Clients are helped to set realistic goals and to face their fear of failure - if the perfectionist rigidly holds on to what he values, his desire for those values become his ruin. Perfectionists are encouraged to rethink their values and decide whether to be trapped by them or be freed.

Performers are crucially concerned with their standards of performance, for obvious reasons. According to a survey of popular musicians carried out by British psychologist and musician Geoff Wills (Wills and Cooper, 1988), the most stressful factor they encountered was 'Feeling you must reach or maintain the standards of musicianship that you

set for yourself'. Over half the musicians surveyed claimed to suffer in this way. Musicians, like all performers, strive for high standards, and feel they are inconsistent in reaching them.

This inconsistency is a scourge to any feelings of confidence, and can seem like a roller coaster ride, where you are only 'as good as your last performance'. Reaching the standards you set for yourself is a question of maximising your motivation and matching your ambitions to reality. Maintaining it is a matter of being put off as little as possible by the constant variations in performing situations and the ups and downs of a typical career. Maintaining a professionally satisfying standard demands some sort of consistency - being able to rely on a 'constant' source of ability which is always at your disposal.

Since environmental factors are variable, so the subject needs to re-affirm constant ability as a buffer against the ups and downs of the profession. At some moments it is necessary to cope more, at others one can feel naturally confident. Do not overestimate the power of changing circumstances to unsettle you, but at the same time allow for their existence.

If, for example, you simultaneously have to cope with a number of destabilising factors - say, tiredness, stress and relationship problems - then deal with these problems separately on a practical level, and don't confuse them with your performing ability. Where you can see in advance that there will be a number of disturbing factors in a gig such as instrument not working properly, lateness, difficult venue, challenging music or musicians, go for damage limitation rather than performing at your best.

Conclusion

Successful people generally advance through talent and continuous work rather than the maladaptive form of perfectionism. They market themselves and have meetings with influential people while others daydream of success. They do things while others agonise, sometimes getting up at six in the morning to practice. In a unit of one hour, where the achiever works, the perfectionist worries.

If you want a simple three word answer to the internal worry patterns of the perfectionist you could probably not find anything better than the immortal Nike slogan "Just do it!"

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THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR REDUCING STRESS

1. Thou shalt NOT be perfect, nor even try to be.
2. Thou shalt NOT try to be all things to all people.
3. Thou shalt leave things undone that ought to be done.
4. Thou shalt NOT spread thyself too thin.
5. Thou shalt learn to say "NO".
6. Thou shalt schedule time for thyself, and thy supportive network.
7. Thou shalt switch off, and do nothing regularly.
8. Thou shalt be boring, untidy, inelegant and unattractive at times.
9. Thou shalt NOT even feel guilty.
10. Especially, thou shalt NOT be **thine own worst enemy, but be thy best friend.**

Piano Notes

Simon Markson

Many years ago a proud mum informed me that her son often carried his Grand Piano onto the beach in the South of France. Indeed the piano attracts a fair number of eccentrics. A once regular visitor to our showroom used his favourite piano for therapeutic purposes and was dismayed one day to find it was gone. We never saw him again, it was as if he had lost a dear friend. Over time, almost any Piano will tell its own story- if only it could. Our most popular advertising campaign involved a dialogue between an anxious Upright and a Grand, the former about to leave us for its new home. To attribute human qualities to an object (I won't say inanimate) might seem strange, however the characteristics of the piano lend itself to interpretation. Without mythologizing too much, the Piano has a reputation for mystery and imagination. The association with colourful characters and events throughout history plays a part in this, but also in the very nature of its appearance and construction is an enigma –what is hidden within this box of tricks? How does it work?

Rather than launch into a technical description of the inner workings of the piano, as fascinating as this might seem, the story of the development of its place in social and economic history provides more illumination regarding its iconic status. We imagine the more delicate harpsichord being given away on the streets of 18th century London to stave off the growing popularity of the fortepiano (both loud and soft). In addition, the creative interplay between the composer and the piano builder, each trying to realise their dreams. Beethoven would furiously attempt to repair broken strings during performances and in response innovative design and manufacture, inspired bolder (and louder) music. As Empire and Industrial Revolution went hand in hand, the march of progress influenced every aspect of piano design and technology, and the piano occupied a central place in Victorian life. The Great Exhibition showcased ornate pianos in Gothic and Medieval styles, and the venerable house of Broadwood occupied premises close to Parliament that matched it in size if not grandeur.

The Piano of today has not changed all that much in the past 100 years. The fundamentals of an iron frame, cross stringing and an effective damping system evolved during this time. Since then piano

builders have refined their Art and, where finance allowed, aimed for perfection in tone and touch. Each and every, piano is individual and unique. Some are mass-produced and standards vary, although it is possible to produce an excellent quality piano to an industry standard at a competitive price. Hand crafted instruments are in a different league- not only because of the quality of materials used, but also because of the individual care and attention given by the craftsman who imparts the love of labour and pride in creating a masterpiece. Some six thousand parts make up each piano: carefully seasoned wood; felt and cloth; springs and pins; washers and jacks conjoined and compressed; iron frame and sounding board. Every part is made to interact- some to resonate and amplify sound, others in a supporting role, quiet in the background.

Whenever a Piano arrives in our showroom, from the factory or newly restored, there is always a moment of anticipation. It is quite a challenge to run the floor-space side of the operation, mainly because of size and placement. The sheer physicality of the piano inevitability involves customer decisions based on furniture. Modern pianos are often smaller to suit flats, apartments and to negotiate awkward stairways. Design features are often important, a choice of veneers, an ebony high gloss finish, chrome pedals and hinges rather than brass, a toe or a leg, finesse, and yet again form over function. However, musical consideration also plays a part in customers' decisions. A sensitive ear will search for clarity of sound, warm tone, perhaps brightness in the treble. Also, for resonance, timbre, and a singing quality held for a fraction in the air. Touch is personal too: one will prefer a lighter, springy feel; another, a more resilient and heavy touch to exercise the muscles. An evenness of touch across the keyboard is critical, and depth of touch in the key bed. These expectations could be based on experience or just gut feeling. Sometimes our staff will demonstrate, and often clients are accompanied by teachers, family, friends, tuners or simply are left to try out for themselves a range of pianos. Each piano is carefully tuned and regulated prior to dispatch and we provide advice on care and maintenance. This includes positioning, tuning, cleaning and humidity control.

Piano hire is a major part of our business, for both domestic use and in concerts and events. Every week our pianos appear in Theatres, Festivals, Concert venues and at private functions. This aspect of our work is often frenetic, timing is critical and we provide 24 hour support for clients. Our new Bosendorfer Concert Grand was on centre stage at the Roundhouse electric proms recently and our Yamaha Grands are regular features at the Albert Hall.

A piano is a major purchase and one that can last a lifetime. Often hiring with option to buy is preferable.

In this way, acquiring a good piano is open to almost everyone, and it is ideal for youngsters starting out on the journey, students at music college or temporary residents in the Capital. The piano represents a sound musical investment as is it a tool for creativity and expression. An inexhaustible repertoire secures its future and although there are now fewer pianos in homes compared to 50 or 100 years ago, they are now played more often. Silent pianos with midi interface make them truly modern and friendly to neighbours. Little wonder that the number one favourite choice for companion on desert island is...yes – a Grand Piano!

General Advice to Musicians

Christopher B. Wynn Parry, M.B.E., M.A., D.M., F.R.C.S.
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of the highly acclaimed book "The Musician's Hand" - a Clinical Guide (Martin Dunitz)

Responsibilities of Performing Musicians

1. Importance of General Fitness
2. Importance of Good Posture
3. Good, well balanced diet
4. Need to work on relaxation
5. Importance of 'warming up' and 'cooling down'
6. Sensible practice technique, not more than 20-30 minutes at a time.
7. STOP and stretch for five minutes, have a drink
8. Need to have some 'body control' techniques so that musicians can control the body in times of stress and *not let it control them!*
9. Need for recreation / holidays
9. Need to develop broader culture

Responsibilities of Teachers

1. Correct choice of instrument for musician's body build and temperament
2. Correct technique from early stages
3. Inculcate sensible practice and study of technique
4. Early referral to Doctor/Therapist in case of trouble

Playing should never be painful if technique is sound, body fit and spirit calm!

Reviews

BOOK REVIEWS

"Solitude"

by Anthony Storr
(1997, HarperCollins paperback)

I had the great good fortune to do a radio programme with psychiatrist and author Anthony Storr before his death in 2001, in which we both agreed that creatives generally derived no benefits from madness, on the contrary seeking flow and harmony in their work. As we chatted, he revealed his fear of asthma attacks in public places and how this had led him towards a quiet and controlled life. Genius that he was, he made no apology for his love of solitude - he elevated it into an art.

In this richly intelligent and fascinating book, Storr explains how solitude is, in the words of Gibbon, "the school of genius". As performers, our life may be played out on a public stage, but surely our deepest and most transcendent moments – the motor force behind our artistry – have much to do with the revelations that come to us in what Wordsworth called "the bliss of solitude".

Whether by temperament or circumstance, many of our greatest cultural figures like Kafka and Wittgenstein found a maturity of conception in the capacity to be alone. In the state of solitude much can be done, worked on and then fed back to the world. "Einstein's special theory of relativity depended upon his being able to imagine how the universe might appear to an observer travelling at near the speed of light. These are examples of fantasies, which although originating in imagination, nevertheless connected with the external world in ways which illuminated it and made it comprehensible".

This is equally true of the many musicians, artists and poets referred to, and Storr gives us an interesting insight into creative development with age, citing Beethoven's late period - "Third period works.. are less concerned with communication.. often unconventional in form.. are characterised by an absence of rhetoric or any need to convince.. and seem to be exploring remote areas of experience which are intrapersonal or suprapersonal rather than interpersonal."

Though centred on the theme of solitude, the book covers a wide area of personal experience, albeit with the overriding theme of extolling creative work at the expense of socialisation. "Many creative people appear to nurture their talents more carefully than they do their personal relationships, demonstrating a human potential which can be found in everyone, albeit in embryo form in most of us."

Storr is anything but elitist - "An inner world of fantasy exists in every human being and finds expression in an infinite variety of different ways", he writes. "The man who goes racing or who eagerly watches football on television is giving rein to fantasy, although he may not be creating or producing anything. Hobbies and interests are often aspects of a human being which most clearly define his individuality, and make him the person he is.... in Britain every weekend sees the banks of rivers and canals lined with fishermen who keep a discreet distance from one another and seldom converse. The same applies to gardening. Everyone needs interests as well as interpersonal relationships; and interests, as well as relationships, play an important part in defining individual identity and in giving meaning to a person's life."

Guided imagination is the key - for Storr "We should not merely strive to replace fantasy with reason as Freud would have us do. Instead we should use our capacity for fantasy to build bridges between the inner world of imagination and the external world. As Goya wrote – fantasy abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters; united with her she is the mother of the arts and the origin of their marvels".

"The interaction between inner and outer worlds is easily seen when we observe children at play" continues Storr. "Children make use of real objects in the external world, but invest these objects with meanings which derive from the world of their own imagination." Somewhat like Palaeolithic artists who, in painting animals on the walls of their cave dwellings, "were not making works of art in order to express their personal way of looking at the world, but were attempting to work magic."

Storr further argues that like self-development, "individualism" is comparatively recent in human

history. Tribal cultures saw a person as essentially part of the family and social structure, he recounts, writing that when he treated people in Nigeria the whole family would come along to the session and have no idea why a psychiatrist would want to see a patient alone. Such attitudes are still present in traditional village life, and are also typical of aspects of China's social life.

Is Storr's rosy view of solitude in accord with others' findings? Well, not exactly. A 20 year longitudinal study (University of Southampton ageing project) into self esteem in older people found that interest activities and the development of identity were important to self esteem, but so were activity levels and relationships with other non-family people. But what Storr is most critical of is not socialisation but the imperative of joining in with others. "The happiest lives are probably those in which neither interpersonal relationships nor impersonal interests are idealised as the only way to salvation", he states, reminding us that "The capacity to be alone is a sign of inner security rather than an expression of a withdrawn state".

What lessons can performers and musicians learn from this hugely interesting book? Certainly, the importance of enriching our work by constant creative reflection. Certainly the benefits of "happy

practice periods" rather than practice which introduces physical or psychological tensions that are later mirrored in our public performances. Reducing our dependence on the adulation of our public and channelling it into increased personal development and a more focussed search for our inner truths should in most cases take us further along our creative paths.

And in an age of New Media where so many people find themselves sitting for hours alone at their computers, yet simultaneously are seeking friends and even love on the Internet, the paradoxical nature of solitude could hardly be more relevant.

Solitude for Storr may have the ultimate benefit of mending the hurts and scars of damaged intimacy, as we "make sense and order out of life rather than relationships with others". And in seeking contact with life itself "the oceanic feeling of complete harmony between inner and outer worlds" may be revealed, even if only transiently. To the creative, these fleeting moments may form the basis on which a whole life's work may be constructed.

Andy Evans (Author of "This Virtual Life – Escapism and Simulation in our Media World", Fusion Press 2001)

THE RECENT 9th SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION OF AUSTRALIA

Earl Owen

In comparison with the other major International Piano Competitions, the standard of performances at this year's competition was much higher than previous years' and its effects upon its entrants were more intense. There were more entrants, and after the initial DVDs and CDs were judged, 240 entrants were auditioned in 12 countries by 2 different Local and one Chief selector before some 36 extremely talented young artists were selected. They came from 36 different countries!

In previous years, more than one competitor had broken down during the competition, and been unable to continue to the next round because of hand or muscular difficulties. In the 2004 competition one of the Semi-Finalists broke down and could not continue, and in this competition one of the hotly-favoured contestants, who had won several other competitions stayed up all night preparing for the coming performance but was then unable to do himself justice, and had to retire before the Finals.

A session for the competitors and the audience on "How to Avoid Injuring oneself whilst playing the Piano" is very popular at this competition, but it was held just before the Semi-Finals and was too late for the two artists who had already broken down. It has been suggested that such a session should be held during the First-Round in future. A contentious point for piano competitions is whether the Jury selected for the competition should include any teachers of the very competitors who get to play, that is..... their own pupils! This can be hard to avoid, as the best teachers often attract the best pupils, and all teachers try to get the very best out of their pupils. It was due to the fact that some of the most respected teachers from the acknowledged "best" Music Schools in the world were both jurors and had their own pupil competing, that some members of the public complained openly that this shouldn't have been allowed. Of course, the finalists included some of these very talented pupils in this and some of our earlier competitions.

The entire competition was broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Commission in FM Stereo-Radio and could be heard in almost every country in the world. It went on all day for 16 days and had an expert commentary by music icons and presenters. Every performance was recorded and the highlights, being the very special performances amongst those, were later issued as a boxed CD collection. During the course of the competition the competitors played in a trio or quartet with a fine local chamber group; the finalists played a Mozart concerto of their choosing; and lastly a 19th or 20th Century concerto, both with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the famous Sydney Opera House. All sessions were fully booked, and the interest in the community of this big city of Sydney was quite remarkable this year.

On the whole, the competitors were well enough instructed and mature enough to avoid the worst cases of performance anxiety (although such was present, but far less than in previous years), but their over-practicing led to several competitors having hand, finger and shoulder injuries during the 16 intense days, and also to the withdrawal of an earlier "Audience Favourite to succeed". The youngest competitor was aged 16 and the eldest 29. The competition finished in August. First, Second and Third places in this competition go on to extensively tour the whole of Australia in Recital Tours afterwards, and play other selected Recitals in Australia later in the following months and years. The Winner was Konstantin Shamray and the second prize went to Tatiana Kolevsova, both born and schooled in Russia. In third place was the American Eric Zuber, a pupil of Leon Fleisher.

On the whole, the winners and at least half of the 36 who competed were of the very highest performance standard, having played with some of the world's most famous orchestras, under the greatest living conductors of the moment. And so, we in Sydney were treated to our quadrennial feast of the Piano, and our whole country benefited. Letters, emails, telephone calls and messages were sent to the A.B.C.

F.M. station, and the Competition Headquarters from all over the world praised the superb transmissions and the quality of performances over the 16 days. At the moment, in Sydney there is an Elgar Festival conducted by the maestro Vladimir Ashkenazy, Chief Conductor with the Sydney Symphony and Music Patron of this Competition.

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ISSTIP RELATED COURSES

M.A. in Performance Health at Thames Valley University

This new course is designed to give musicians, teachers and other performers the skills they need for an informed, stress free and enjoyable career in the arts. Subjects include motivation, peak performance, overcoming stage fright, the personality of the performer, creativity and self-expression. Also included are medical problems and their diagnosis, and the posture methods (Alexander, Feldenkrais) so vital for musicians and performers of all kinds - all these taught by experienced experts in the field including ISSTIP staff.

Besides the core Health module above you will do a Dissertation plus either a Music Performance option or a Music Management and Promotion option - both highly useful to the modern musician for whom these new courses have been specially formulated.

We are keen to train practicing musicians and music teachers - who can show industry experience instead of a first degree – and they can benefit by lifting their performance skills to Masters Level by choosing the Performance option. Other health and performance professionals (actors, dancers) can do the Music Management option, which will give an insight into modern management and self promotion methods relevant to Arts Management.

Our course has proved popular with working musicians, teachers, agents/managers and health professionals wishing to take their knowledge and skills to Masters Level. Students will be taught to think about the issues raised in terms of their own experience and knowledge, and classes offer a lively interchange of creative ideas.

The course is a year full-time or two P/T, and is taught in Ealing, W.London. Students can join in October or February.

P.G.DIP AND P.G.CERT PROGRAMMES

These shorter courses are available at lower cost and include the core Health modules with EITHER the Performance module OR the Music Management modules. You will work alongside the MA students, and by additionally doing the Dissertation you can convert the P.G.Cert into a P.G.Dip. You may also take the remaining modules at a later date to qualify for the full MA.

We would love to hear from all those interested on 020-7602-2707 (Andy Evans) or Robert. Sholl@tvu.ac.uk, the co-leaders. Robert is an academic and organist specialising in Messiaen, and Andy is a musician and psychologist, author of four books on performance psychology and long time ISSTIP practitioner. Info online at: performanceandmediahealth.com

Details of fees and courses are available from the Academic Office on 020-8231-2779 or online at www.tvu.ac.uk